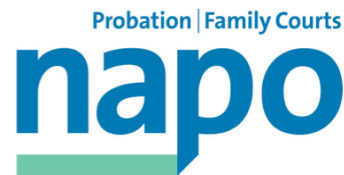




Race In Justice



Joint Action Research Initiative

National Survey of BAME Probation Staff

Interim Report

May 1st 2015

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1. Introduction

This report presents the interim findings of a unique online survey of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) Probation Service staff members, eliciting their experiences and views regarding the introduction and impact of recent government reforms of the Probation Service.

The reforms, implemented under the ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ (TR) policy, are arguably the most radical change to the probation service since its inception. It has replaced 35 Probation Trusts across England and Wales with –

- A single National Probation Service (NPS), responsible for the management of high-risk offenders, and
- 21 private sector Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) responsible for the management of low to medium risk offenders, and the supervision of prisoners serving short sentences.

The online survey of BAME Probation staff members is the first stage of a joint action research initiative involving the Association of Black Probation Staff (ABPO), the Trade Union and Professional Association for Family Court and Probation Staff (NAPO) and the National Initiative for Leadership and Empowerment (NILE), a consortium of BAME staff associations in the Police, Prisons and Probation services.

The action research initiative arose out of a NILE investigation into allegations that Black Managers in the former London Probation Trust had been subjected to racial discrimination in 2014. During the course of that investigation, BAME Probation staff in London raised concerns that the TR process whereby Probation staff members were assigned to either the NPS or a CRC had been implemented in discriminatory manner, with result that BAME members of staff had been assigned to the CRC in disproportionate numbers. The investigation addressed those concerns by recommending urgent action research into the treatment of BAME Probation staff in England and Wales during the TR assignment process and the impact on their confidence and morale.

ABPO, NAPO and NILE launched the online survey on 21st March 2015. The launch was timed to coincide with the 2015 United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the official theme of which was “Learning from past tragedies to combat racism today”.

The survey was closed on 25th April 2015, by which time over 200 Probation Service members of staff had responded by completing all or some of the questions it posed. Our interim report is based upon an analysis of the data summary of completed responses.

The final report, which will be published on 15th May 2015, will include detailed analysis of the substantial amount of qualitative evidence that respondents to the survey provided in 399 additional written comments on the fairness of the assignment process and the impact it has had on their confidence and morale as members of staff in the Probation Service.

1. Methodology

The survey was designed and conducted by a NILE Research Team, operating under a Project Management Committee comprised of representatives from each of the organisations involved in the joint initiative.

The survey was promoted by ABPO and NAPO through emails, websites and social media outlets operated by their respective organisations, NAPO online news, text messages and word-of-mouth. Through these various means BAME staff members were provided with the link to access and complete the online survey which was hosted by NILE.

The survey consisted of a series of questions and options through which respondent were invited to state -

- The Probation Trust they were employed by prior to the introduction of TR, and the NPS region or CRC that they are currently employed in.
- Their post title, length of service, and some of their protected characteristics (race/ethnicity; gender; age bracket; disability; gender reassignment).
- Whether they stated a preference for assignment to the NPS or a CRC, and if so, whether they were assigned to their preference in the first instance.
- Whether they believed that the assignment decision in their case (a) was based on the official criterion i.e. the work they were undertaking at the time, and (b) was fair.
- Whether they believed that the assignment decision in their case was influenced by their race/ethnicity, gender or age in any way.
- Whether they appealed against the assignment decision in their case, and if so, whether their appeal was successful or not.
- Whether they believed that the outcome of their appeal was influenced by their race/ethnicity, gender or age in any way.
- Whether the TR assignment process had any impact on their level of confidence in the Probation Service.
- Whether the introduction of TR had any impact on their morale as a member of staff in the Probation Service.

Respondents were also invited to provide written reasons, explanations and comments in a number of 'free text' boxes, each of which was limited to a maximum of 150 words. Our analysis of the contents of the text boxes will form part of the final report.

In order to ensure that our analysis is based on reliable evidence, responses that did not identify the respondent's employer (NPS or CRC) and/or their ethnicity/race, gender and age bracket were filtered out of the data summary prior to analysis.

Despite the fact that the survey was designed for BAME Probation staff members and promoted as such, we received a small number of completed responses (18) from Probation staff who identified their ethnicity/race as White British. Those responses have also been filtered out of the data summary prior to analysis. However, they will be the subject of analysis and comment in the final report

2. Findings:

Profile of Respondents

There were 206 responses to the survey in total, of which 158 were complete. The number of complete responses from BAME Probation staff was 140. Our findings in relation to those respondents are as follows.

Location

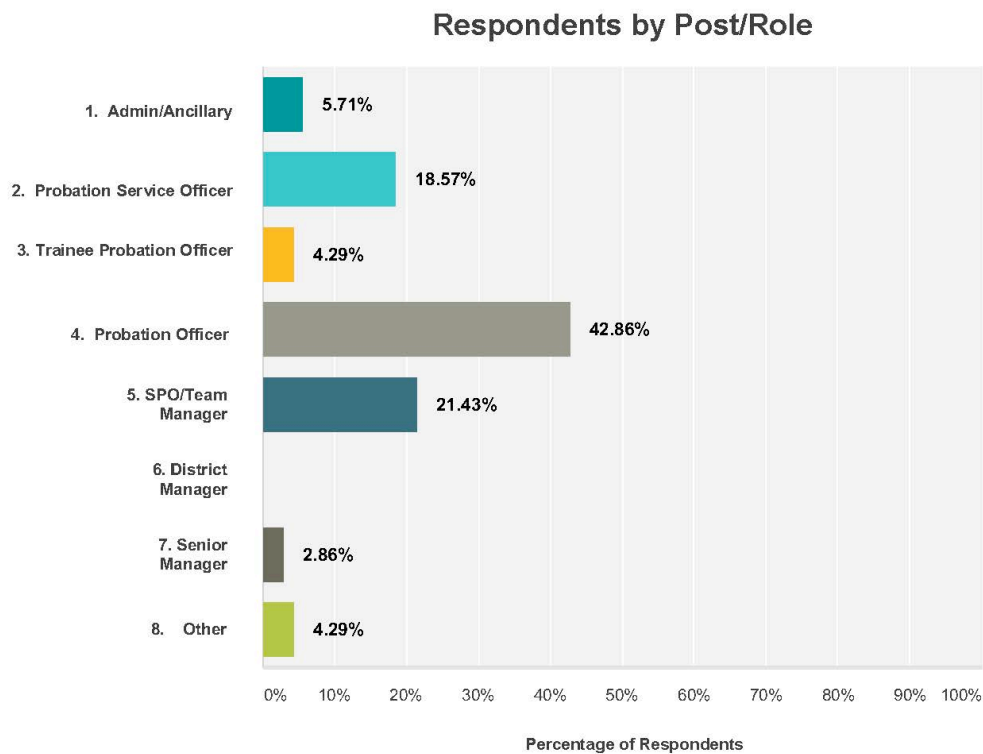
- They had previously been employed in 25 of the former Probation Trusts.
- In terms of current employment, 50% of them are employed in 6 NPS regions, and the remainder are employed in 21 CRCs
- NPS London and CRC London provided the greatest number of respondents (51%)
- The second largest group of respondents are employed in NPS Midlands and CRCs in that region (21%)

Posts

- With the exception of District Managers, the respondents were drawn from all the main post categories within the Probation Service
- Probation Officers comprised by far the largest group of respondents (42.9%)
- Of the remaining categories, the majority of respondents are employed in Senior Probation Officer/Team Manager and Probation Service Officer posts

Figure 1

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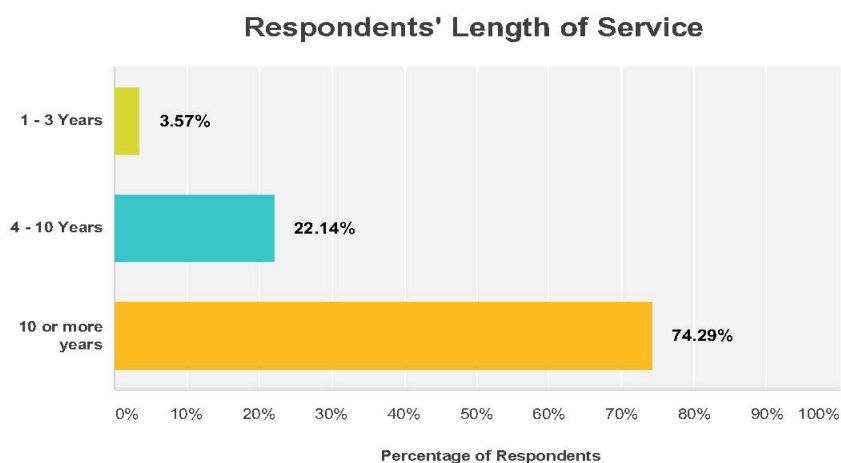


Length of service

The overwhelming majority of respondents (74%) are long – serving employees who have worked in the Probation Service for 10 or more years

Figure 2

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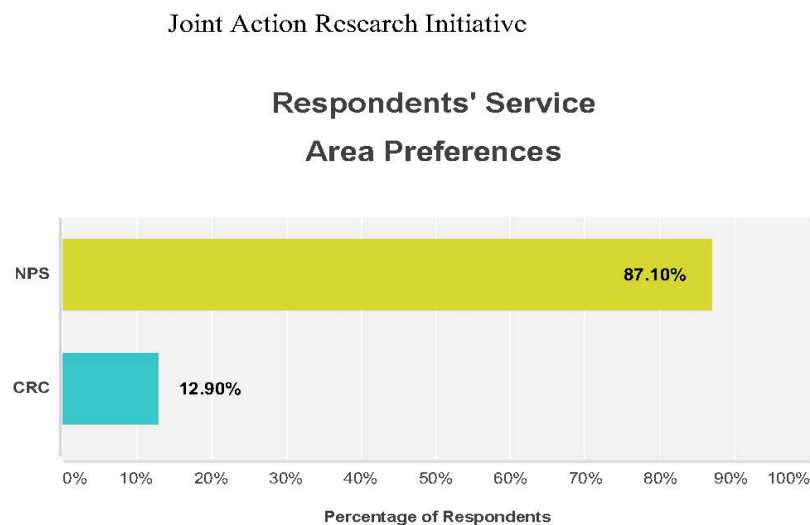
Age and Gender

The vast majority of respondents are middle aged: 36.4% in the 41 – 50 age bracket, and 38.5% in the 51 – 60 age bracket. Almost three quarters of the respondents (74%) are female.

Assignment Outcomes

- Almost two thirds of respondents (66.4%) had stated a preference during the assignment process, and of those the vast majority (87%) had opted for the NPS

Figure 3



- A significant proportion of those that had stated a preference were not assigned to their preferred service area in the first instance (37.6%)
- A third of respondents believed that, contrary to the official guidelines, the assignment decision in their case was **not** based on the work that they were undertaking at the time (33.3%).
- A substantial proportion of respondents believed that the assignment decision in their case was not fair (39.7%).
- Although 49.5% of respondents believed that their race/ethnicity had not influenced the assignment decision in their case in any way, the majority either believed that it had (10.7%) or were 'Not sure' (39.7%).
- The majority of respondents believed that their gender had not influenced the assignment decision in their case in any way (60.2%). However, a substantial minority either believed that it had (5.4%) or were 'Not sure' (34.4%).
- Only 1% of respondents believed that their age had influenced the assignment decision in

their case, but 35.5% stated that they were 'Not sure'. The majority of respondents believed that it had not influenced the decision in their case in any way (63.4%).

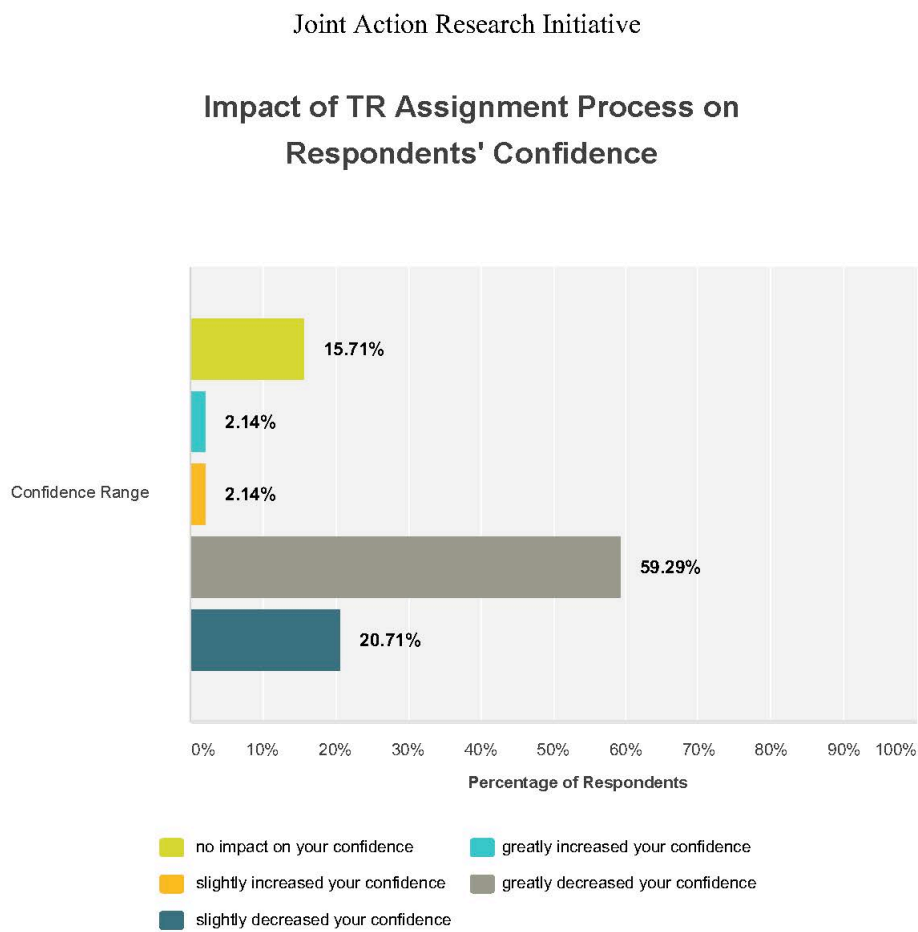
Appeals against assignment decisions

- 57% of respondents that were denied their preference in the first instance, appealed against that decision. However, only 5% of those appeals were successful
- The vast majority of respondents (72.7%) believed that the outcome of their appeal was not 'fair'.
- A majority of respondents (57.6%) believed that their race/ethnicity had not influenced the outcome of their appeal in any way. However, 15.5% believed that it had, and a further 27% stated that they were 'Not sure'.
- 63.6% of respondents believed that their gender had not influenced the outcome of their appeal in any way. However, 9% believed that it had, and a further 27% stated that they were 'Not sure'.
- Over two thirds of respondents (69.7%) believed that their age had not influenced the outcome of their appeal in any way. The remainder stated that they were 'Not sure' (30.3%).

Impact on Confidence

An alarming number of respondents (80%) stated the TR assignment process had '*decreased*' their confidence in the Probation Service. Of those, 59% stated that it had '*greatly decreased*' their confidence.

Figure 4



Impact on morale

A disturbing number of respondents (83%) stated that the introduction of TR had '*decreased*' their morale as a member of staff in the Probation Service. Of those, 65% stated that it had '*greatly decreased*' their morale.

Figure 5

